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ABSTRACT

Twenty-two first grade children were questioned about the aged and their capabilities both before and after a unit of study about old people. Background information was collected from the children's parents to understand the children's attitudes prior to actual classroom instruction about the elderly. An analysis of responses to the three questions asked of the children indicated that the most noticeable changes as a result of instruction were in their attitudes about what things older people are capable of doing. Although discussion, children's books, and pictures were used to encourage alternative ways of viewing the elderly; these methods were unable to modify the strong, previously acquired opinions that the children had developed regarding the appearance of the elderly. Apparently, ideas and stereotypes about the aged need to be altered not merely by instruction in school, but by society in general. (A list of children's books about the elderly is appended for teachers who want to use such materials in their classrooms.) (RL)

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CHILDREN'S IDEAS TOWARD THE AGED

by

Mary V. Fusco

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Acknowledgements

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Attitudes, dispositions, feelings or positions are in a constant state of growth and formation even in the very young child. Their first experiences are influenced by their parents, brothers, sisters, friends and close relatives who are responsible for exposing them to morals and values as well. Consequently, by the time the child is of school age, he has developed an individual personality complete with all of these things: morals, values and attitudes.

The Hypothesis

The question is: whether or not these ideas, especially concerning the aged, can be altered once the child is in school.

Is there any change in attitudes, of first grade children, towards the aged through controlled classroom experiences which are designed to foster a positive attitude?

Throughout this study a more positive and non-stereotyped concept of the aged will be repetively presented. It is hypothesized that there will be no significant difference in attitude toward the aged shown by the children even after their participation in these controlled classroom activities.

Related Research

Is there a shift in the influential power of the home vs. the school? If so, teachers may be faced with an increased responsibility of fostering more positive attitudes

in areas beyond the academic. Annabel Bixby (1978) found that teachers can and do affect their students attitudes. In questioning her former students, even after twenty years, they recalled their teacher's general attitudes as more memorable then the skills being taught. In their opinion, actual learning is influenced more by teacher attitudes. If this is true, then part of the changes that may occur throughout a school year may be due to the positive approach of those presenting the material on the aged.

This concept of modifying attitudes may suggest ways to alter attitudes relating to other stereotypes as well. This theory may enable teachers to go beyond their normal classroom curriculum and encourage children to become more compassionate and humane towards their fellow men.

To communicate alternative ideas on ageism, children's literature will also be used. It may be found that many of the children's materials published only support negative stereotyped concepts of the aged in complete opposition to the attitudes being encouraged in this program. Despite this difference, the materials will be used to provide springboards for discussion in comparing and analyzing previously acquired attitudes, while at the same time opening up opportunities to formulate new ones, hopefully, more positive. As stated in an article concerning children's bias against older teachers, Peterson (1980) "... The prevalance of "ageist" characters stereotyped in children's literature raises the

possibility of children being prejudiced against The elderly ..." If this is the case, then these children may be listening to stories that reinforce their negative concepts of the aged. This may be due, however, to the fact that young children may not have had extensive opportunities to become involved with elderly adults. Learning by actual involvement was found to be most memorable by former students of Annabel Bixby (1978). If this is so then actual experiences with the aged, will facilitate more change in attitudes than abstract experiences through books and other audio-visual means.

This actual involvement proved to be most beneficial and satisfying for both the children and the aged. One such satisfying experience was found in the Lady Bug Cooperative Nursery School, Bugge and Miller (1979). It was here that an entire nursery school was housed within the senior citizen home. In this way it provided a constant exposure and availability of the young children to the aged. It also provided enjoyment for the children as well as instilling a sense of usefulness for the elderly.

Limitations

As indicated earlier, actual experiences involving young children with the elderly have proved to be advantageous in fostering positive attitudes. Research conditions, however, did not permit the author to go beyond the classroom setting into senior citizen homes to experience a work-

ing relationship.

There also was a restriction on the number of elderly grandparents or older friends who could volunteer to come into the classroom to visit as an alternative to the previous method mentioned above.

Lastly, the element of time was a factor to be considered since there was such a limited amount within each school day. This study of the elderly was incorporated into the present Social Studies curriculum and was limited to two days per week.

Procedures

This study began with 22 first grade children from a small town in south Jersey.

In organizing the study the basic assumption was that the children had some preconceived ideas on the aged and what they are capable of.

The first step based on this premise was to question both the parents and the children. A questionnaire and cover letter explaining the program was sent to the parents of the children involved in the study. It included questions regarding: (Appendix A)

- -their children's previous exposure to the aged
- -their children's past experiences with the aged (grandparents, friends, etc.)
- -without questionning the children, their child's reaction towards an elderly person is.

-elderly volunteers who could come into the classroom to share a talent, hobby, or craft with the children.

The questionnaire was used as background information on the children to understand their attitudes prior to actual classroom experiences with the elderly.

The next step was to question the children individually to reveal their own opinions on the subject. The questions were asked orally and the responses were recorded by the teacher. This information was used as a "pre-test" of attitudes which were compared to the same post test evaluation after the instruction to discern any changes in feelings and opinions of the children. (Appendix B)

A basic concept repeated throughout the instructional sessions reflected on both the similarities and differences between the children and the elderly.

The concepts discussed in the program were coordinated with the standard first grade Social Studies text. The study of the elderly was incorporated into such areas as the family, changes in living things, and a unit on feelings and emotions. In general, the children were encouraged to develop attitudes that went beyond themselves to include others and most especially the aged.

A total of one hour a week was devoted to the study of the aged as outlined above.

Children's literature books (Appendix C) were used often. Purposes were set prior to the reading to establish

specific positive ideas. Can only older people do this? What kind of a person was this character? Is this something we can do? There were also questions asked after the reading as well.

At times the children were asked to draw pictures showing their grandparents and themselves participating in activities they enjoyed. These were incorporated into a booklet on "Grandparents."

Other activities were adapted from the article by Margo Sorgman, Marilou Sorensen, and Marilyn Johnston (1979) entitled, "What Sounds Do I Make When I'm Old? A Hands on Approach to Ageism." These included reading a similar version of the well known nursery rhyme of the old woman in the shoe, changing the last two lines to be:

> "Time hurried by her and the children
> left too, What's left for the old
> woman alone in her shoe?"

The children responded orally stating activities that would answer the question from the poem.

Using pictures of a girl at various stages of her life (from a baby-an older woman) activities which were appropriate or characteristic of each age group, comparing and contrasting them to their own age, were discussed.

Children were sent letters requesting that they interview their grandparents or other elderly person over the holidays. They were to question them on the types of things they do during a day and the activities they liked most.

The children had a choice of drawing pictures to record the responses or they were asked to utilize their parents as recorders of the information. All of the findings were shared with the group.

Newspaper pictures of the elderly in different roles were used as discussion starters to analyze feelings as they experienced them and the elderly might feel.

Using the same questions that were used during the pre-test, the children were questioned again. The results were recorded. This information was then evaluated and conclusions were drawn.

Results

The results of this study are presented in a three column format. Prior to each of these presentations the question that was posed to the children is listed. In the first column is their response prior to any teaching experiences, in the second column is their response after their classroom participation. The third column indicates a + for a change in the child's response and a - for no apparent change shown.

An x^2 test was used to determine if there were any significant changes in the responses of boys and girls after instruction designed to alter changes.

Question Number 1: Tell me about what an old person is.

Before Training	After Training	Change in Response
They make friends. They're small. They sit in rocking chairs and make things.	Sometimes it's a grandma.	-
It means they're old enough.	Persons like one of those grandmother persons or old.	-
They look old sometimes.	She's really old and wrinkly.	-
No response.	Someone who might have white hair.	-
Somebody who dies. Grandmas and Grandpas.	A person who does stuff.	+
He's lazy, he's weak.	A poor person.	-
It's old.	It's old.	-
Old person is nice. Friendly, fun to play with.	They have gray hair.	+
They have wrinkles.	They're old. I'm not old because I'm a child.	-
It can be your Grandma.	They can be Grandmas.	-
They are bigger.	A person that's real old. They grow.	+
Old.	Old people don't go	

Before Training	After Training	Change in Response
Parents and teachers.	Old people are bigger than little kids.	+
They grow.	A Grandma.	-
Old-- almost to die like my Nana.	Person who don't work that much.	+
Like a grandma.	Real old-- people have to help them.	+
He coughs alot. He dies.	If you see one, and think about them.	+
From being around so long.	They grow more.	-
My grandfather.	They're special, happy.	+
Someone whose poor.	They're people. Could talk right?	+
Age makes them old.		

An analysis of the protocols indicates that 10 out of the 21 children changed their responses in a positive direction. An x^2 test of the significance of this change in the boy-girl samples indicates that the change probably resulted from chance since the x^2 was zero.

Question Number 2: What do they look like?

Before Training	After Training	Change in Response
They have a white beard, they walk different (crooked), they come from hospitals, they look different.	They're crumbled up, skin all wrinkled, personswith wrinkly skin on arms and hands.	-
Not new, and don't look pretty. A little ugly. They don't brush their hair. They don't do things, can't cook supper.	Look like their working. Real old with wrinkles, and work alot.	+
Old people have white hair. They have canes.	Sometimes they're short, they might have wrinkled skin.	-
They have wrinkles, a little different hair.	They have wrinkles, they're slow.	-
Sometimes their face gets crunched up, their hair might turn white, their eyes start to close.	They are wrinkly and have wrinkly hands.	-
They have wrinkles, they're small, have white hair, they have spots.	They have gray hair sometimes, have wrinkly skin, they are small.	-
They have wrinkled skin, they are weak in hearing.	They have wrinkled skin, can't run very well.	-

Before Training	After Training	Change in Response
They are old, they walk funny, and have a walking stick.	They have wrinkles, my grandma has to hang on things. She's too old.	-
They look different their skin turns different. First they get young then you get old.	They kind of have different skin, it gets older and looks wrinkly. They have gray hair.	-
They have a beard. They looks old and have a pipe. They have longer skin.	They look wrinkly and old. They shake alot and are shivery.	-
They have beards and a wig, they are taller and have brown hair and brown eyes.	They are small and their skin is skrinkly.	-
They look like us, their eyes are blue or brown.	They have wrinkly skin, they are big, sometimes they yell.	+
They bend down sometimes. They have little lines on them. Their hair sometimes turns white.	They have old skin. They have aching backs.	-
They have old skin. They're bones stick out and they don't look like us.	They have wrinkled skin. They don't wear high heels that much. Maybe they have dogs like my own Nana. Maybe they live alone.	-

Before Training	After Training	Change in Response
Their face is crumbled, they look old. Body is crumbled not like mine.	They have wrinkled up face and big veins.	-
They are old and buried.	Their hands are crumbled up.	-
They look sad. Their face is black. Might have a stick to walk with.	Their hair is in a net. Sometimes they are in a rocking chair. Their hair might be curly.	-
They have gray hair sometimes. They have wrinkled skin and a cane.	They have wrinkled skin. Sometimes they have canes. Sometimes they even have crutches.	-
He's wrinkled. Has short hair. Sometimes they are sad. Sometimes they are happy. They walk slowly.	They are old. Grandma has white hair.	-
Some are sad. They have white hair and look like this. (crouched)	They look like me and you. They look special.	+
Their skin is wrinkled. Sometimes they can't walk. They have glasses sometimes.		

The above responses indicate a change in only 3 out of the 21 responding. The change in the boy-girl responses when tested

by x^2 indicated these changes occurred by chance. The resultant chi of 2.73 with one degree of freedom was not significant.

Question Number 3: What things can old people do? Can they do the same things that we can?

Before Training	After Training	Change in Response
They can walk, sit in a rocking chair, go down stairs, run, drive a car.	They can still drive a car. They still can walk straight. Can go up North, go to work with cars. They write on the board like us, make things, and go in water.	+
They can only eat cereal, do sewing, wooling, eating. They can't jump up and down and play.	They do lots of stuff in the house. They cook, make cookies, pies, vacuum. Yes, the same as us, iron clothes wash clothes, dry, make valentines, make stuff with wool.	+
They can cook, knit, they can't run and they can't play.	They can knit, cook, build things. Yes, they can do the things that we can do.	+
They take you outside, buy you Christmas presents, write, sometimes they read, they can take a ride.	They can paint, ride a car, can be a teacher, watch television, clean houses, and sew, they talk to friends, water plants, jog, play games, color, draw, and read.	-

Before Training	After Training	Change in Response
They can smoke, walk, draw and they can die.	They can cook, write, walk, sleep, go ot. They can do some of the things we can.	+
They can water gardens, work on his boat, they wash dishes, and ride a bike.	They can play with you, walk, they can ride, and take us places and make things.	-
They can cook, smoke, sometimes do cart-wheels, no tumble-saults. They can run and walk like us.	They can do cartwheels, do jumping jacks, tumble over, maybe do head-stands, they can run. jump, and hop on one leg.	--
They can walk, cook, and get dressed. They can't jump, run, skip, or hop like us.	They lay in bed all day. They sit down and watch T.V., water plants, iron and sew.	-
They can kneel,sleep, clean, cook, they can do none of what we can.	They can still cook, sew, help people that have broken feet or something, go to the store, still drive, maybe have grand-children. They do some of the things we can. I knit a little like my Nana, sew a little, ride on a bike and play with kids if they want.	+
They get sick, feel like they will die. Not really, old people can't do what we can.	They live by themselves, water their plants, write letters to a friend, do some of the things we can do write stories and stuff.	+

Before Training	After Training	Change in Response
Grandmas cook, and watch their grandchildren, they can walk, talk, see, and hear. Grandpas cut firewood and help Grandmas.	Grandpas like to tease. They go out with their grandchildren and children. They play with their grandchildren.	-
In a car they hold on to handles. They sit, they fasten seat belts, can sleep. They can feed themselves breakfast.	They can still bake, and cook, sleep, they can take a bath like us. They drink coffee like us, they eat like us, drive a car still, can ride a motorcycle.	+
They can cook, can walk, they can walk a dog, they can water plants.	They can cook, they can write, they can sew, knit, crochet, run, walk, go to the store, can paint, and they can eat.	+
They can still drive cars, help people, water plants, and sing.	They can drive a car, cut wood (Grandpa loves to cut wood), they can play baseball, walk dogs if they have one. Yes, they can walk, watch television, drink and eat like we can.	+
They can sit, maybe drive, rake leaves, clam (like Grandpop) work, andwash dishes.	They can go to sleep, my Grandma always does, cook, play cards (grandpop always plays), go to the park with me, go to the store shopping, and go out to dinner.	-
They have a cane,	They can do all the	

Before Training	After Training	Change in Response
sometimes they bend. No, they can't do as we do, some times they can walk.	things we can do, run, take baths, ride, play with children, draw and color, go to work like we go to school, they can read, can swim, and say numbers.	+
They ask your name, take out garbage, help you pick up papers in your yard, water plants, and close shades.	They can make a garden, can water it, go to bed, and wash dishes like us.	-
They can still drive, can write numbers, they can't glue, and have to stay in the hospital.	They can walk, and sometimes run and walk a dog.	+
They can play with children, go to church and work.	They play with us, eat with us, and can do a little of what we can do.	-
They can't do anything, can't lift garbage cans. Can walk, see, and can cook.	Old people can rock in chairs, cook like mothers and fathers, and dress themselves. They can do almost the same things we can.	+
They clean house, bathe the dog, can drive, run, jump, skip, and hop like us. They Can't do all the things we can.		

An analysis of the protocols indicate response changes in 12 of the 21 respondents. A x^2 analysis of the changes in the boy-girl responses produced a chi square of 3.78 with one degree of freedom. The resultant x^2 was found to be significant below the .05 level. This result suggests that the change in responses to the questions by the boy and girl samples produced by instruction could not have happened by chance.

An analysis of these results indicates that the most noticeable changes as a result of instruction were in question number three. Children evidenced a change of attitude in terms of what older people are capable of doing as illustrated by their responses more than they did in other areas.

Conclusions and Implications

The most significant discovery in this study relates to the results gathered in respect to the third question on the activities elderly people are capable of.

The children appear to have based their responses to all three of the questions prior to classroom activity on their home life experiences acquired in their early years at home.

Since these ideas are so ingrained in the children's thoughts, the teacher must consider this fact and understand that it is only through repeated activities and continued examples of positive attitudes, that the children's opinions will become altered.

Teachers must utilize materials and methods, as well as personal experiences with the elderly specifically designed to deemphasize stereotypes and generalizations.

In the first two questions, discussion, children's books and pictures were used to encourage alternative ways of viewing the elderly.

As is noted by the results, however, these methods were unable to modify the strong, previously acquired opinions of these children related to the appearance of the elderly.

The children were apparently more influenced by their personal experiences and by pictures in books which tend to be grossly stereotyped thereby reinforcing their own ideas. Despite discussions and the use of alternate methods to point out these generalizations, the children did not alter their opinions.

In evaluating the responses to question number three, however, it can be noted that a significant change, resulted indicating that this change could not have been the result of chance. The question appears to have been related more to activities designed to create a change in their opinions.

If ideas and stereotypes are to be altered and replaced by more positive ideas, society in general, along with the families and schools, needs to become more involved. It is not practical or desirable that such an activity be undertaken by only the school. It is only when ideas are reinforced constantly, and by everyone, that any major results

will be achieved. We as a society, together with the parents and the schools must unite and become involved with the elderly. This interaction of diverse age groups living and learning and growing together can produce positive change in stereotypes and attitudes toward the elderly.

This research topic, seemingly uncomplicated, has lead to numerous topics to be discussed. In organizing the related research, there will be three major areas: General Attitudes and Prejudice, Important Influencing Powers (family, school, and society), and Research related to the approaches being used in this study.

General Attitudes and Prejudice

Even from early twentieth century time, researchers and educators were aware of the importance of attitudes and prejudices in children as well as adults. One of the earliest definitions of attitudes was defined by Thomas and Znaniecki (1918) as being a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual response to all objects and situations with which it is related.

Prescott (1938) discusses numerous roles of attitudes as related to human life. One of these states that attitudes constitute the core about which the whole personality is built. If our attitudes are harmonious among themselves and realistic regarding the outside world our behavior is consistent and effective and we are said to have an integrated, healthy personality.

Lasker (1929) states that in order to help foster the formation of more positive social attitudes, children need to develop resourcefulness, courage, and open-mindedness in

facing new experiences. We should constantly encourage children to judge each situation on its own merit rather than resort to pre-judgements. These new attitudes will help to minimize prejudices and pre-conceived attitudes. This type of education needs to progress as the child grows older in order that the pressures of society and its stereotypical judgements doesn't overpower the children's open mindedness. Lasker's final remarks expressed a desire for adult and child education to proceed together if prejudice was to be eliminated in the future.

Scott (1964) found that in a study by (Bachman, Byrnne, Hartley, Kemp, Macher) that attitudes, values and beliefs one has are related to his needs for group affiliation and social approval. Bachman found that those who perceived themselves as having attitudes similar to people that they admired or consistent with groups of people they wished to be involved with were highly resistant to change.

Important Influencing Powers

All of these factors create complex situations leading to formulation of various attitudes, values and beliefs. The research previously discussed has given some insight into attitudes and prejudices in general. The next area to be discussed will relate more specifically to the topic of this research paper -- the aged. The following research studies will explore the most important influencing powers in an

individual's life as is related to their general values, attitude and belief formation in regard to the aged.

The family relationship towards attitude formation will be discussed first since these are the first experiences the child encounters.

Reeves (1964) believes that the development of a value system, begins very early and is well on the way by the time the child starts school. She goes on to say that the whole range of social attitude is one of the problems children must learn to handle, because social personal relationships are part of the business of being human.

Mead (1964) believes that attitudes are acquired sometimes by continuous direct teaching at home or school or both and sometimes by other agencies. This indicates that although the home may be the first educator of children, no one area is solely responsible for the development of attitudes. Children are exposed to prejudices and stereotypes in their home environment at an early age. Parents must come to more of a realization of their influential power in forming positive attitudes towards the aged and other typically stereotyped groups.

Lasker (1929) asks the question, "Do parents desire their children to be free from prejudices?" He goes on to say that many parents actually want their children to share their same prejudices although there are rare cases of parents who would like their children freer from prejudice then they were. He continues by saying all children's attitudes reflect

those of the environment in which they grow up in. What children feel and think, especially about other people, represents almost entirely what they have learned about them. What children learn lies to some extent within the control of their parents and teachers.

Gordon (1963) summarizes these statements when she reveals that a child learns his humanness from the persons who surround him. She feels they are crucial to his development and view of himself.

Stock (1949) finds a definite relationship exists between the way an individual feels about himself and the way he feels toward others. If within the family environment then, the child is made to feel accepted and positive about himself then their attitudes towards others including the aged, will be more positve.

Along with the parents awareness of their prejudices, an attitude of open mindedness should be coupled to enable children to develop non-prejudiced attitudes, values and beliefs.

Compared to studies on parental involvemnt in educating children regarding the aged, there was more of an abundance of information concerning the role of the educational system and educators, available.

In the initial stages of expecting the schools to develop positive attitudes towards the aged, it is once again found to be the adults involved who must first adopt a more

open minded approach themselves before attempting to instill these positive feelings in children.

Mead (1964) says that to improve attitudes is one objective of the educational systems, if not the most important objective.

Dunn (1964) reiterates thefeelings of Mead by stating that in our customary approach to the problems of aging, we have given education a role to play, but we have usually thought of this role as supportive rather than primary.

Once again, this deemphasizes the influence of any one area in contributing to attitudes. All three areas prove to be of significance each in their own way.

Prescott (1938) states that our schools must make education of attitudes their primary concern. In considering the idea of attitude formation based on identification with those we admire or look up to, Prescott continues to say that any teacher who is at all human and attractive is the object of numerous identifications by different pupils. Teachers do then, influence children's attitudes.

This is in agreement with Annabel Bixby's (1978) findings on teachers' influence on children. In her study she stated that former students twenty years later, recalled more the teacher's attitudes towards the children then any specific skills that were taught.

If teachers do have such an influence and can be positive in their attitudes then they can prove to be valuable

resources in exposing children to open minded attitudes especially with the aged.

Everett (1948) in speaking of teachers states that their task of resolving prejudice has just begun. They have come to know that theirs is the task of men of good will everywhere the building of a more intelligent and kindly world.

A statement by the principal in Everett's school system felt, "All techniques to resolve prejudice are useless if teachers do not have real respect for children."

How can we encourage them to formulate more positive attitudes towards others without beginning first with the children's positive self concepts? If there is not a mutual respect between teacher and child then the children will not be able to develop more open attitudes towards others.

Once again it reverts back to the need for teachers to be trained to foster positive attitudes . Mead (1964) felt that many teachers as yet are not prepared to cope with the kind of change involved in improving social attitudes and others try to avoid the task for fear of social disapproval. Mead sees value in teachers being trained in this area, the same as in the areas of spelling and addition.

Gordon (1963) states in relation to this topic, that teachers take into account three sets of attitudes toward difference: 1. the teacher's own 2. those of society as reflected by the school and 3. those of the children. She admits that there will be changes made in society but in the

meantime, the school must not reflect the prejudices that society reflects. Together the teacher and child may learn that difference is not necessarily the opposition of right and wrong but a valued aspect of the possibilities of human nature.

The realization on the part of the teachers and the school of the great importance placed on their role in educating students in this realm, will reflect a change in the traditional curriculum to include values, beliefs, and attitude education as well. Reeves (1964) believes that they (teachers) are deeply aware of their responsibility for attitudes.

To repeat Prescott's (1938) statement, schools must make the education of attitudes their primary concern.

The third influential power relating to children's attitudes is the society in which the child lives and grows. Although families and schools have an affect on developing attitudes of children, their adult attitudes are constructed within a framework called society. Although society may change, people themselves have a tendancy to hold on to their beliefs. It is not until we as individuals within the society experience changes toward the aged that schools and families will begin to reflect these new attitudes.

In Jones (1975) he quotes Brody (1970) "the phenomenon of a large aging population is one of the most dramatic and influential developments of the twentieth century. Never

before have there been so many older people nor have they been so old." Considering this new development there is a need for new more positive attitudes.

Mead (1964) states that negative attitudes are found to be in direct opposition to the American way of life and constitues serious handicaps to it. When analyzing the constitution of the United States, in regard to, all men being created equal, then Mead's idea of prejudices towards minority groups, including the aged, does appear to be a contradiction.

Neugarten (1970) views chronological age as becoming less important in the future. He sees the young and old taking active roles according to special abilities and experiences. He feels this is in opposition to the presently held beliefs that once you are of a certain age, you are no longer valuable or necessary.

He continues to say that future age restrictions and categories will become more relaxed, the old will age less quickly, and the young will mature faster and so there will be in the future a blurring of age groups. Neugarten forsees a more favorable outlook towards the aged in the future.

Jones (1975) feels that the process of teaching its citizens about aging is the responsibility of the society in which we live. The school is one of the main agencies that can assist in this basic process common to all of us. He goes on to say we should use the aged as a resource person to

lend positive experiences to today's children.

Dunn (1964) argues to point out that aging should be understood and valued for what it is -- an integral part of living and maturing. It is a natural process yet most of us tend to avoid thinking of it or planning in terms of it. Again he is thinking in terms of re-evaluation of the present mode of thinking.

Packman (1947) feels that our culture has been neglecting the values of age as compared to other great ancient cultures. She advocates an evaluation and utilization of values for the aged as well as for youth. Both have alot to offer; the freshness of youth and the wisdom of age. We must analyze and appraise the values of age in order that society continues to appreciate and utilize them. She feels that for the continuation and development for a highly cultured society more attention needs to be given to the aged.

Considering this research of Packman's is from the forties, just indicates how society has handled this issue over the years. It wasn't until more recently that more attention has been devoted to the topic of aging.

Dunn (1964) speaks of aging in terms of a dynamic maturity. He feels that the processes of aging are so intertwined with the processes of growth and maturation that aging cannot be considered as a thing apart. He continues to discuss numerous other areas which indicate a new trend of thinking in regard to the aged.

Maurice Linden (1974) in a more recent study questions why there was such a large number of mature people so unhappy, dissatisfied and complaining? In her answer she explains that it may be due to popular prejudice and cultural attitudes. She contends that our older citizens are still needlessly frustrated and excluded to some extnet from social participation and are often tolerated rather than welcomed.

This can be related to Beard (1949) who found that even then there were problems caring for the elderly by family. He went on to explain that because of the small homes and limited incomes sometimes elderly were turned away even from their families. Beard found that any mention of the aged in text books listed them as a liability and usually associated them with problems. Once again this reflects negative ideas held by both society as evidenced in the literature as well as by the family in regards to the aged.

In reviewing the related research on the aged in light of the societal views, one can understand where the negative attitudes have grown and thrived. These consequently are passed on and promoted (sometimes) in both the schools and the homes.

We as a society should consider the thoughts of Linden (1974) who feels that any effort to understand human behavior must consider the total person and must relate him to the society in which he lives.

In summation, a response from Neugarten (1970). "In the long run, we may come to diminish the importance of chronological age as a major distinguishing feature between individuals and instead of speaking of social roles for the aged, come to speak of the social roles of individuals who happen to be young, middle aged, or old, but more important, who happen to have different tastes, different goals and different ways of enhancing the quality of their lives."

Related Research

In developing this study, active participation with the aged and children's literature were two major areas decided upon to encourage more positive attitudes towards the aged.

As various groups realized the implications involving both the young and aged there has been more of a trend towards utilization of the aged as a resource and an assest in the education of the total child.

Bugge and Miller (1978) found that interaction among parent and senior citizens helped bridge the gap between generations and at the same time gave senior citizens a sense of usefulness. Children at the same time, benefited from exposure to a generation they are often denied in our society.

Sorgman, Sorensen and Johnston (1979) felt that one common bond between the young child and the older person is the similar conditions they face. They are both among other

similarities subject to stereotypic representations. One would expect these to facilitate real understanding between young and old yet the onposite is true. They go on to explain some of the reason for this is because for most young children, and old people, the extended family is dead. The activites they developed in this study were used to raise children's consciousness about their own aging process and foster more positive attitudes.

Lee Hopkins (1978) lists a few programs designed to increase communication of both the young and the aged. Some of these programs are listed below:

Grandparent's Day, adopted in Merrick, New York, where both grandparents and members of the senior community spend a morning with the children in school.

In Iowa, 4,5,and 6 th graders became "little friendsfor older friends." Children take a weekly trip to senior housing, or other centers for the elderly and usually follow up with letters and phone calls.

Children in Appleton, Minnesota, third graders, make gifts and present holiday programs for patients at a residence for the aged. Several classes in New York City hold "Grandparent Storytelling Days," during which grandparents come into classes to read or tell favorite stories.

Phillip Rosser (1980) quotes Maggie Kuhn from the Gray Panthers speaking about the young and old, "Together we can make changes, separately we aren't as effective." Again,

Phillip Rosser, speaking in behalf of these various programs designed to encourage relationships with young and old, states that, in homes with a history of child neglect or abuse, foster grandparents strengthen the family by serving as loving role models, helping the parents with their daily tasks and offering encouragement.

Mitchell and Schachel (1979) explained their findings in a program involving Family Hospital Day Care Center and Family Hospital Nursing Home. They found the Foster Grandparent program initiated to communicate understanding, support, and encouragement, enabled the young and the old to experience the aliveness of being part of a community family.

In Ann Arbor, Martha Mehata (1979) spoke about (T-LC) Teaching-Learning Communities, once again designed to allow volunteers to utilize any special hobbies or talents. Again the results were beneficial to students, teachers and grandpersons involved.

Most of the programs discussed evidenced positive results beneficial to all of the participants in these programs. As a result of these new programs, children are becoming more aware of the aging process and of the aged people themselves in a more positive sense. As a result these attitudes may spread and someday become more of a part of our society's view of the aged.

As Bennett (1976) says, contacts between the young and old should be initiated early in the educational process

before the negative stereotypes rigidify.

Coupled with these involvements with the aged will be an emphasize on children's literature used to encourage more positive attitudes.

The question, however, is raised by Peterson (1980) as to the value of literature. She feels that, "The prevalence of ageist characters stereotypes in children's literature raises the possibility of children being prejudiced against the elderly."

Cohen (1980) discusses in detail the many stereotypes involving the aged that are found in children's literature. One particular bias mentioned concerns America's disregard for old things and old people as reflected in most of the books on this subject. She however, recommends a variety of books that resist ageist stereotypes. (Appendix C)

Hopkins (1968) mentions however, that children's books with positve views of the aged can be used to initiate and enhance the attitudes and lead to discussions and projects.

Dietrich (1974) relates a study concerning racism, and sexism in children's literature but since these involve stereotyping, his suggestions can be applied to ageism as well. He suggests that children's literature does play a direct part in forming children's attitudes at an early age. Dietrich goes on to discuss the recommendations of Singh in which she encourages teachers to combat stereotyping by choosing appropriate materials and teaching critical reading.

Following in Appendix C are a list of books on the aged. Most of them have been recommended because of their non-sterotyped presentations. Those,however, that do contain negative phrases or aspects should be used to foster critical thinking.

Beard, Belle Boone. "Are the Aged Ex-Family?" Social Forces, 27: 274-9. March, 1949.

Bennett, Ruth. Can the Young Believe They'll Get Old? "Attitudes of the Young Toward the Old: A Review of Research." Personnel and Guidance Journal, 55: 136-39. November, 1976.

Bixby, Annabel A. "Do Teachers Make a Difference?" Education Digest, 38-40. September, 1978.

Bugge, Sharon and Mary Ellen Miller. "A Nursery School for all Ages." Early Years, 9: 43-45. March, 1979.

Cohen, Margot. "Intergenerational Friendships in Kid's Books," Ms, 9: 91. August, 1980.

Dietrich, Daniel. "Racism, Sexism, in Children's literature." The Reading Teacher, 28, #3, 346-349. December, 1974.

Dunn, Halbert L. "A Positive View of Aging Asks Much of Education." School Life, 46: 30-4. January, 1964.

Everett, S. "Teachers Combat Prejudice." National Education Association Journal, 37: 216-17. April, 1948.

Gordon, Julia W. "Human Difference." Instructor, 73: 53. October, 1963.

Hopkins, Lee Bennett. "Age is One Thing We All Share." Teacher, 96: 20. December, 1978.

Jones, Ruth S. "Changes in Political Orientations of American Youth: 1969-1975." Youth and Society, 10, #4: 335-59. June, 1979.

Lasker, Bruno. "Childhood Prejudices." Child Study, 6: 107-109. February, 1929.

Linden, Maurice E., M.D. "The Challenge of Aging It Means Growing Up Not Down." Mental Hygiene, 58, #3. Summer, 1974.

Mead, A.R. "Attitudes and Education: A Limited Statement." Education, 84, 17: 427-432. March, 1964.

Mehata, Martha. "Grandpersons Wanted Here!" Instructor 89: 86-88. October, 1979.

Mitchell, Ardelia and Crystal Schachel. "Journey in Time: A Foster Grandparent Program." Young Children, 34, 3: 30-32. March, 1979.

Neugarten, Bernia L. "Old and Young in Modern Societies." American Behavioral Scientist, 14, 1: September/October, 1970.

Packman, Laila. "Appreciation of Age in Ancient Cultures." Social Studies, 38: 316-19. November, 1947.

Parsons, Theodore W. "Attitudes and Values: Tools or Chains?" Educational Leadership, 21: 343-346. March, 1964.

Peterson, Candida C. "Are Young People Biased Against Older Teachers?" Journal of Genetic Psychology, 136: 309-310. June, 1980.

Prescott, Daniel. "Our Children-- Their Attitudes." The Education Digest, 4: 37-9. October, 1938.

Reeves, Katherine. "Attitude Control." Grade Teacher, 81: 8+. January, 1964.

Rosser, Phyllis. "Skip a Generation." Ms, 9: 90-1. August, 1980.

Simonson, Michael. "Attitude Measurement How and Why?" Educational Technology, 19: 34-38. September, 1979.

Sorgman, Margo, Marilou Sorensen, and Marilyn Johnston. "What Sounds Do I Make When I'm Old? A Hands-On Approach to Ageism." Social Education, 43: 135-139. February, 1979.

Stein, Jess. The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, The Unabridged Edition. New York, 1967.

Stock, Dorothy. "An Investigation Into the Interrelations Between the Self Concept and Feelings Directed Towards Other Persons and Groups." Journal of Consulting Psychology, 13,3. June, 1949.

APPENDIX A

Dear Parents:

I am presently working on my masters thesis program at Kean College. My topic concerns children's ideas towards elderly people. Following are a few questions that I would like you to answer without talking to your child first.

Basically, this program will involve working with the children twice a week for about thirty to forty five minutes. The program will try to broaden their knowledge of the process of aging and to help them to respect people different from themselves.

If you have any questions feel free to contact me through the office.

Thank you so much for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mary V. Fusco

APPENDIX A

1. How do <u>you</u> think your child feels towards elderly people in general? (grandparents, older friends etc.)

2. Please tell about your child's contact with elderly people. (List older people they see or things they do with them, and the type of things they do together.)

3. Do you know of anyone (elderly person) who would be interested in coming in to school to share any type of activity with the children?

PLEASE RETURN THIS TO SCHOOL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT I HAVE ONE OF THESE FROM EACH OF THE PARENTS. AGAIN THANK YOU FOR YOU ASSISTANCE.

APPENDIX B

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. Tell me about what an old person is.

2. What do they look like?

3. What things can old people do?

   Can they do the same things that we can?

APPENDIX C

William's Doll
Charlotte Zolotow

I Love Gram
Ruth A. Sonneborn

Black is Brown is Tan
Arnold Adoff

Grandma Didn't Wave Back
Rose Blue

Mary Jo's Grandmother
Janice May Udry

Grandfather and I
Helen Elizabeth Buckley

Grandfather Tales
Richard Chase

Grandmas and Grandpas
Alice Low

Grandmother and I
Helen Elizabeth Buckley

Grandmother Cat and The Hermit
Elizabeth Coatsworth

Grandmother Oma
Ilse Kleberger

Grandmother Told Me
Jan Wahl

Grandpa
Barbara Borack

Grandpa and Me
Patricia Lee Gauch

Grandpa and the Swallows
Fred Rodrian

Dodo Every Day
Illse Margaret Vogel

Grandmother Lucy Goes on a Picnic
Joyce Wood

Grandpa Had a Windmill,Grandma Had a Churn
Louise A. Jackson

A Little At a Time
David A. Adler

A Look at Old Age
Rebecca Anders

How Does it Feel to be Old?
Norma Farber

Through Grandpa's Eyes
Patricia Mac Lachlan

Great Grandfather, the Baby and Me
Howard Knots

Carrie's Gift
Effner Tudor Holmes

My Grandson Lew
Charlotte Zolotow

Grandpa and Me Together
Susan Goldman and Albert Whitman

Mandy's Grandmother
Liesel Moak Skorpen

A Mitzvah is Something Special
Phyllis Rose Eisenberg

Grandpa, Me and Our House in the Tree
Barbara Kirk

Everybody Grows Up
Mary MC Burney

Kevin's Grandma
Barbara Williams

Sara's Granny and the Crocidile
Seymour Cheast

The Giving Tree
Shel Silverstein

Grandpa's Farm
James Flora

Grandpa's Long Red Underwear
Lynn Schoettle

Grandpa's Wonderful Glass
Samuel Epstein

Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs
Thomas De Paola

Matt's Grandfather
Max Lundgren

Mulberry Music
Doris Orgel

In the Morning Mist
Eleanor J. Lapp

I Have Four Names for My Grandfather
Kathyrn Lasky

I Hate Red Rover
Joan Lexau

Grandma Is Somebody Special
Susan Goldman

Nonna
Jennifer Bartoli

Secret For Grandmother's Birthday
Franz Brandenberg

Fish for Supper
M.B. Goffstein

My Very Special Friend
Lucille E. Hein

Mia, Grandma and the Genie
Susan Jeschke

If I Could Be My Grandmother
Steven Kroll

Watch Out For the Chicken Feet in Your Soup
T.A. De Paola